



*“Forging a Brighter Future for Children and Families”*

AT THE EVANS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS | UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

## **Guiding Principles**

### **Access to High Quality Early Learning Project**

1. High quality early learning is essential to children’s healthy development and school readiness. Quality is dependent upon the stability of care and attachment between caregivers and children.
2. Families choose care for many reasons with cost being one factor. A market approach offers choice while providing incentives and requirements for quality. Parents need better information to be informed consumers of high quality early learning.
3. Effective early learning professionals need specialized training and education.
4. Parenting education should be available to all caregivers, to support parents and other relatives and caregivers in their role as first teachers.
5. Recruiting and retaining qualified staff who have alternative career options requires adequate compensation.
6. High quality early learning should be affordable to families at all income levels for costs and prices to be sustained in market.
7. To improve quality, providers need a reliable revenue stream and investment capital.
8. Resources are limited: cost-effective solutions are required

## **ELC Policy Choices**

### **Access to High Quality Early Learning Project**

1. For the first three years of QRIS implementation, what salary schedule should be used for early learning professionals—a moderate salary range (annual equivalent to starting elementary teacher salaries for caregivers with a BA) or higher salary range (hourly equivalent to starting elementary teacher salaries for caregivers with a BA)?
  - a. Option 1: Moderate range produces average salaries of \$10.22- \$11.97 per hour in centers (with comparable earnings for family child care providers with the same level of education and maximum capacity of children).
  - b. Option 2: Higher range produces average salaries of \$13.81-\$16.17 per hour in centers (with comparable earnings for family child care providers with same level of education and maximum capacity of children).
  - c. Difference between these two options totals about \$200-\$250 million annually in aggregate costs.
2. What is the definition of “affordability”?
  - a. Round I specification ensures that families pay 0-10% of net family income on tuition ranging from lower to higher income groups.
  - b. Option 1: Increase parent tuition to more than 10 percent of net family income for higher income groups.
  - c. Option 2: Change net income to gross income, with the new affordability goal to no more than 10 percent gross family income and less for lower income families.
  - d. Differences in cost between changing the affordability criteria from gross to net income can only be determined by modeling effort in Round II.
3. Work/ education/ training requirements: should parents who are not currently employed or in school or training have access to scholarships for early learning programs?
  - a. Option 1: Families receive scholarships for early learning regardless of whether parents are in work or training, similar to public education.
  - b. Option 2: Children from low-income families receive scholarships regardless of the parents’ work status. Families above 200% FPL must be either working or in training/ education to receive scholarship.
  - c. Option 3: Families of all income levels must be either working or in education/ training to receive scholarships, similar to the current subsidy system.
  - d. Difference between Options 1 and 2 (totals about \$100-200 million annually depending on moderate or higher salary option).